

# Former FAO and Other UN Staff Association

Associazione dei Pensionati della FAO e di altre Organizzazioni delle Nazioni Unite



**Newsbrief 103**  
**November 2017**

## Allianz contract extended for another two years

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The three Rome-based agencies (RBAs) have jointly decided to extend the BMIP/MMBP health insurance coverage through Allianz/Allianz Worldwide Care (AWC) for the next two years (2018 and 2019), maintaining the same coverage and conditions that were in place during the past three years. The contract amendment is now under preparation and should be signed soon. Medical premiums are expected to rise by approximately four to five percent over two years, but increases will be limited by the three RBAs' agreement to use the BMIP profit-sharing account to defray some of the premium costs.

Under the extended contract, increased efforts will be made to include more preventive arrangements, e.g. screening for diseases, as well as ways to reduce claim costs by agreeing more conventions with medical providers in Italy and overseas.

Allianz will continue to provide the Group Life and Accident insurance (GLADI) for the next two years; the expectation is that there should be some further reductions in premium levels.

As soon as FFOA is apprised of the new insurance premiums, we will inform our membership.

## A Word from the President on Behalf of Your Executive Committee

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Recently, a lot of our time has been spent following up on the decision of the three main Rome-based Organizations to again go to tender for our medical claims handler. As you may know, the present Allianz contract expires at the end of 2017. After the tendering process, it has been decided to extend the contract for another two years, i.e. 2018 and 2019 (see page 1 for details). Our situation has been particularly complicated by FAO's refusal to convene JAC/MC meetings since February 2016, despite our repeated requests to do so.

Another development of great interest and importance to FFOA is the United Nations Secretary-General's decision to appoint a new representative for our Pension Fund investments. Mr Sudhir Rajkumar will succeed Ms Carol Boykin. Mr Rajkumar, currently head of the global pension advisory programme at the World Bank, has more than 28 years of broadbased global investment experience. Furthermore, he currently serves as a member on FAO's External Advisory Committee on Investments, a member of the Investment Committee of the United Nations Office for Project Services, and Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors of the International Centre for Pension Management. More information can be found at: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sga1766.doc.htm>.

The Pension Board also recommended a three-year extension for the Chief Executive Officer of the Fund, Sergio Arvizú. That recommendation is now with the General Assembly.

As most of you will be receiving this Newsbrief in December, may I take this opportunity to wish all members and friends a happy festive and end-of-year season, wherever in the world you may be, and a prosperous and healthy New Year 2018.

I am pleased to invite those members living in Rome and nearby to the 2017 Year-End party, where we will have an opportunity to share seasonal greetings and enjoy exquisite snacks and drinks. The party will take place on **Wednesday, 13 December, at 16:00 hours in the Indonesian Room**. We hope to see you in great number.

Finally, please make a note in your calendar that the FFOA office will close after **Friday, 22 December 2017 and reopen on Monday, 8 January 2018**.

**Alan Prien**  
**President**

### Newsbrief 103 November 2017

Newsbrief, the FFOA official quarterly newsletter, is produced in English and Italian and is distributed free to all members, electronically to those who have internet access, and in print to those who do not. Newsbrief (current and back issues) is also available on the FFOA website: [www.ffoa-web.org](http://www.ffoa-web.org). Suggestions or contributions from members are welcome.

Editor: **P. Nelson**  
Newsbrief coordinator: **A. Waeschle**  
Designer: **O. Bolbol**

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## Pension Matters

(Responsible: M. Breschi, A. Prien, A. Fusco-Femiano)

### United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board - Vienna, 24-28 July 2017

The Pension Board (PB) is the central body in the governance structure of the United Nations pension system, with oversight over the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF). As such, the Board brings together the three constituent groups with direct interest in pension-related matters, i.e. the Governing Bodies (Member Nations), the Representatives of the Executive Heads of Member Organizations and the Representatives of Participants (elected by Staff), together with the Representatives of the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS), the sole recognized body representing retirees. An observer without voting rights, but fully recognized as a key player in the Board discussions and decision making, FAFICS plays a unique role in providing wide visibility to key issues of vital interest to retirees around the world. Thanks to its international nature (there are currently 61 Member Associations), vast internal expertise and professional independence, FAFICS is able to bring an unusual, and yet key, point of view to the many subjects debated by the Board, that otherwise often would not reach the attention of the three constituent groups.

The Board exercises its oversight function by extensively reviewing, monitoring and guiding the work of the UNJSPF. It does this during its annual plenary meeting and through its Standing Committee during the remainder of the year. The Board reviews matters brought to its attention in all management, administrative and operational fields, and approves proposals for recommendation to the Advisory Committee on Accounting and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and to the Secretary-General for submission to the General Assembly for its final endorsement.

### Election of the Chairperson of the Board

Each year, the Board appoints its Chairperson for a one-year renewable term. At the outset of the July meeting this year, the Board expressed its great appreciation for the excellent work by

Mr Vladimir Yossifov, outgoing Chairperson, thanking him for his competent, balanced and effective leadership. The Board then decided to appoint Ms Annick Van Houtte, an FAO colleague, Representative of the Executive Heads in the FAO/WFP Staff Pension Committee (SPC), as Chairperson for 2017-2018. To Annick, we conveyed warm congratulations and best wishes for fruitful work from the entire FFOA membership.

This year, the Board focused its attention on three crucial matters with significant implications on the successful fulfillment of its mandate, as follows:

### Governance Matters

Earlier this year, two staff members of the Fund secretariat were elected as Participants' representatives on the Staff Pension Committee of the Fund. These two staff members also would have participated in the work of the Board in the group of Participants. That was recognized as a conflict of interest in that they would have been part of the work of the Fund secretariat and at the same time would have been part of the group (the Board) that reviews the Fund's work. The Standing Committee in its June session ruled that those two staff members should not be admitted to participate in the Board. In this connection, the Standing Committee also requested that the Fund Secretariat draft a clear policy stipulating the rules governing the election or appointment of all members of SPCs, including retirees, clearly avoiding conflict of interest situations in the future.

At their annual meeting of 2017, Secretaries of SPCs requested the Fund to adopt a confidentiality statement to be signed by all members of the three SPC constituent groups and the FAFICS Representatives. To that end, the Fund prepared a new text reflecting the confidentiality requirement in section C1 of the Rules of Procedures, and the Board approved that.

### Terms of Appointment of the CEO

Substantial discussions took place regarding the extension of the appointment of the current CEO, Mr Sergio Arvizú, whose current term

will cease by the end of this year. Existing rules allow the CEO appointment to be renewed for a maximum of five years. After extensive debate, consensus was reached among the three constituent Groups, supported by FAFICS, for an extension of three years, with the understanding that clear Fund performance measures would be established and monitored on an ongoing basis.

After the conclusion of the Board's annual meeting in July this year, Representatives of Participants engaged in various correspondence challenging the decision taken by the Board and writing all the way up to the Secretary-General. They pointed to an alleged Fund mismanagement and lack of corrective action with regard to pension administration, ignoring the significant improvements achieved by the Fund with the introduction of the new IPAS system, and asking for a complete turnaround of the Board decision regarding the extension of the CEO. FFOA, like all other retirees' associations led by FAFICS, considers this behavior to be totally unacceptable and against any principle of good governance. We strongly object that a single component of the Board would circumvent its collegial decision and independently go against its deliberations. FAFICS and FFOA are closely monitoring developments in this regard and will inform members promptly of any new decisions.

### **Budget estimates for the biennium 2018-2019**

The Budget Working Group (BWG) reviewed extensively the budget estimates for the 2018-2019 biennium. It noted that the Investment Management Division (IMD) had not proposed any increase in established posts after having filled all senior positions recommended by the Board in 2016, while a number of mid-level positions had remained vacant. It approved, with some reductions and conditions, non-post resources for the completion of key technical projects to enhance the ability of the IMD to plan investments and monitor its performance.

The BWG considered two key priorities for the Fund Secretariat, i.e. the need to strengthen

the client service function and continue to enhance the Fund's operational systems. The BWG noted that the Fund expects surges of at least 2,000 separations per year (20 percent above normal volumes), mainly due to closing or downsizing of the operations of many UN entities. While the UN and other member organizations are downsizing, the Fund must be provided with adequate resources to cope with the increased workload. To this end, the Fund Secretariat requested 11 new permanent positions and, together with the IMD, a total of 63 temporary positions. After careful review and extensive debate among its three constituencies and FAFICS, the BWG decided to recommend only 9 new permanent positions and 46 temporary positions. The increased resources are primarily for the creation of a new Client Service and Outreach operation and for enhanced entitlement services, thereby addressing the most compelling retirees' and prospective retirees' requirements.

The BWG explained to the Board that, in formulating its recommendations, it considered four key factors, namely the balance between flexibility and the stability in the staffing requirements, the continued need to enhance the new administration systems (IPAS), the increasing workload due to downsizing in other organizations, and the need for an appropriate balance in the use of internal and external resources. The BWG was unanimous in its conclusions.

### **Other Key Subjects**

The market value of assets reached an unprecedented high in excess of USD 60 billion on 18 July 2017, largely due to a wise allocation of assets among global equities, fixed-term and long-term investments and cash. The extreme volatility of equity markets continues to be a real challenge. The Fund is engaged in finding the right balance across asset classes, geographic regions and currencies.

The FAFICS representative noted the Fund's underperformance in 2016 with regard to policy benchmarks, as well as the 3.1 percent real rate of return, lower than the required 3.5

percent. Due to the underperformance, the Fund was about USD one billion lower than it could have been. Participants expressed concerns that such lower performance could negatively impact the long-term sustainability of the Fund if no corrective action is taken soon. Board members learned that the position of the Representative of the Secretary-General (RSG), responsible for investments, would soon be advertised, and that the incumbent is likely to apply. (In the meantime, FFOA has been informed that Mr Sudhir Rajkumar will succeed the incumbent, see also page 2.)

FAFICS expressed concern about the low utilization of emergency funds in 2016. It noted that, while the Fund has been proactive in responding to some major emergencies, it was not so prompt in effecting the relevant disbursements. FAFICS appealed to the Fund to expedite the release of funds to approved applicants and requested that an “end-to-end” review be launched as soon as possible to analyze opportunities for improvement in this crucial area.

As part of its review of its own internal Governance, the Board discussed various important oversight functions such as Actuarial Matters, the Report of the Audit Committee, and the appointment of Members of the Asset and Liabilities Monitoring Committee (ALM). Also, part of that discussion was the debate on Representation of Retirees in SPCs. A document by FAFICS was presented to the Board with proposals to harmonize the representation base in all SPCs across organizations to allow retirees’ representatives from FAFICS associations in all meetings of the SPCs, including those on medical matters. The Board approved the proposal and appropriate new text will be introduced in the Terms of Reference of SPCs. Rome-based organizations already allow full-fledged participation of retirees’ representatives in all SPC meetings and discussions.

#### **FAFICS Forty-sixth Council - Vienna, 17-20 July 2017**

The Forty-sixth session of the FAFICS Council began on 18 July, preceded by the Standing

Committees’ presentations on Pensions and the After Service Health Insurance (ASHI) on 17 July.

#### **Report of the FAFICS President**

FAFICS President Linda Saputelli brought the attention of the Council to the continued need for the United Nations to reform in a world facing problems that were unimaginable in the founding years. Retirees were often called upon to help, and as stated by the former Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, retirees “remained valued members of the UN family”. Their contribution to the deliberations of the Pension Board is a widely recognized example of such an essential role. The constructive support of FAFICS was often a fundamental resolution factor in Board debates on delayed pension payments, health insurance and the funding of relevant liabilities.

The President drew attention to the need to follow established guidelines for proposing items for discussion by the Council and stressed the importance of proper communication, pointing to the recent upsurge of misrepresentation of facts, attacks ad hominem and false accusations against the Fund’s management. She also referred to two open letters from the Chair of the Pension Board in response to relentless, false and misguided attacks on the Pension Fund and its leadership. The Chair dismissed an unwarranted open letter by two self-appointed beneficiaries as being “littered with innuendo, inaccuracies and lies”.

The Federation maintained a collaborative relationship with the Fund secretariat, without ignoring the need to resolve shortcomings such as delays in initial pension payments or the lack of timely responses to e-mails, phone calls and enquiries. In advocating improvements in service, the Federation supports the provision of adequate resources to be allocated to the Fund to improve its ability to carry out essential tasks. The Federation adopted a clear policy of ignoring statements made by individuals with no official standing. If their allegations had any substance, FAFICS would not hesitate to take a strong stand against them and advise members accordingly.

## **Membership matters**

The Council approved ASAFI-Senegal and AFICS-Panama as new FAFICS members, thus bringing the total FAFICS membership to 61 associations. Portugal is likely to become a new member next year, thanks to efforts by the President and Secretary. Other countries in the pipeline may include Afghanistan, Algeria, Chad, Morocco, Slovakia and Tunisia. The Council strongly supports the increase in the Federation membership as a key factor of growth.

## **Pension issues**

On behalf of the FAFICS Standing Committee on Pension issues, the Vice-Chair Warren Sach informed the Council of recent developments relating to the investments of the Fund. He referred to the recent decision by the UN Secretary-General to advertise a vacancy for the post of the Representative of the Secretary-General (RSG) responsible for the investment of the assets of the UNJSPF, with the possible implication of a change in occupancy. He further stressed that the main issue was not so much the personality of the incumbent, but rather the financial and institutional aspects of the change.

The crucial issue on pensions was the underperformance (as already highlighted at the General Assembly) of the investments of the Fund (page 5, paragraph 2 refers). While in the short term this shortcoming still leaves the Fund in a generally positive state, corrective measures have to be taken soon to redress the matter.

The need to improve performance contributed to the commissioning of an in-depth review by an independent firm of experts, for consideration by the July session of the Pension Board, covering five main areas including: i) the Fund's main investment practices; ii) risk management; iii) investment limits and compliance; iv) performance management; and v) investment reporting.

The Council agreed with the conclusions of the Standing Committee, in particular that the realities of underperformance should be clearly

presented to the Board for its deliberations. Furthermore, the Council was fully supportive of the recommendations by the team of experts for improvements in the five critical areas, and that these should be reported fully to the Board.

## **Emergency Fund**

The subject of emergency funds continues to be high on the agenda of the Council, which reviewed a document presented by the Chair of the Pension Committee, Gerhard Schramek. The document focused on the extent to which the Fund had approved disbursements from the Emergency Fund in 2016 while introducing more effective outreach activities. The Chair pointed to the low level of disbursements (USD 39,000 out of a total Fund of USD 2,250,000), identifying among the main problems a lack of information on the existence of the Emergency Fund and access thereto, as well as constraints imposed by outdated criteria, lengthy procedures and document-related shortcomings. The lack of a clearly identified focal point in the Fund was an added difficulty. As part of the ensuing discussion, the Council focused on the suggestion that both FAFICS and Staff Pension Committees could be enrolled to assist in overcoming the problems. The Federation could help member associations establishing working groups to assist prospective beneficiaries in the preparation of applications. The Council concluded its discussion by strongly reaffirming the need for greater involvement on the part of the Federation and its Member Associations in the promotion of the Emergency Fund.

## **Representation of retirees**

The Council reviewed a document prepared by Gerhard Schramek that highlighted the inconsistencies in the membership of retirees on SPCs in the UN system. While retirees, via FAFICS, were fully and effectively represented on the Pension Board and on the Standing Committee of the UNJSPF, retirees were not always represented in local SPCs, particularly in meetings discussing disability cases. At its meeting in December 2016, the FAFICS Bureau (President, Vice-Presidents and Secretary) agreed

to submit to the Board in July 2017 a document highlighting this subject and the recommended solution. The Council agreed to submit it to the upcoming Board, trusting that it would meet approval.



Mr M. Breschi, FFOA's General Secretary and FFOA representative to FAFICS and Pension Board.

### **FAFICS position on the Pension Board**

As a result of its reviews and discussions, the Council adopted the following positions as guidance for the FAFICS representatives to the Pension Board:

- The realities of underperformance in the Investments of the Fund to be raised during the deliberations of the Board.
- The recommendations of the firm of experts should be fully supported, disguising any attempt to dilute the significance of the findings.
- Representatives should strongly reaffirm the need for greater involvement on the part of the Federation and its Member Associations in the promotion of the Emergency Fund and its modernization.

- For reasons of good governance, transparency and accountability, the Federation should argue in favor of a fully inclusive representation of all parties.
- In light of the increasing longevity of retirees and the impact of problems associated with ageing on the work of the Fund secretariat, the Federation should stress the need for an improved and expanded client service function including support for an appropriate increase in the relevant budgetary resources.

### **After Service Health Insurance (ASHI)**

The report highlighted the status of the review and debate of the original recommendations, within the various stages of approval (Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), High Level Committee on Management (HLCM) and the General Assembly).

The main recommendations included:

- 1) collective negotiations with third-party administrators;
- 2) collective negotiations with healthcare providers;
- 3) underwriting reviews and negotiations with insurers;
- 4) national health insurance schemes;
- 5) broadening the UNJSPF mandate;
- and 6) other recommendations including the reserves valuation methods, and adequate funding of the ASHI liability.

National health insurance schemes. While the above first three recommendations have reached the final stages of approval within the System, recommendation number 4 is still under consideration. Member Nations have not yet replied to the survey in spite of several reminders of the Secretary General, and the study could not be completed on time.

FFOA will remain vigilant to ensure that any proposal to study the feasibility of using national health plans at the discretion of individual organizations is rejected in view of the significant impact on legal and mobility aspects.

Broadening the UNJSPF mandate (recommendation number 5) means in fact incorporating the liability of the medical plans



into the Pension Fund. We recall that all players concerned, including FAFICS and FFOA, have adamantly opposed this proposal that is currently suspended while the working group is encouraged to concentrate its efforts on promoting consistency in health insurance plan design and plan consolidation, wherever possible.

### **Budget and Administration Matters**

The Treasurer presented the proposed budget for 2018, noting that the proposal was comparable with previous years, with no increase in membership fees. The Council discussed observations by delegations that the significant increase in the Federation workload should be supported by expanded resources. After some debate, the Council approved the proposed 2018 budget and agreed that any increase in resources should be sought by way of increased membership.

### **Election of Officers**

Names of all candidates standing for office in FAFICS for consideration by the Council were circulated. Linda Saputelli was elected President by acclamation and seven Vice-Presidents were elected: Jerry Barton, Warren Sach, Katia Chestopalow, Junko Sato, Marashetty Senappa, Adriana Gomez, and Ari Toubou Ibrahim. The Secretary Jay Sundaresan and the Treasurer Wolfgang Milzow were also elected by acclamation. Six persons were appointed to represent the Federation at the Pension Board in 2018: Marco Breschi, Adriana Gomez, Warren Sach, Linda Saputelli, Gerhard Schramek and Mohammed Sebti.

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## **News from the UN Organizations**

### **FAO**

His Holiness Pope Francis joined the Director-General of FAO, Mr Graziano da Silva, for the official celebrations of World Food Day on 16 October 2017. The Pope called upon governments around the world to make migration a safer and a voluntary choice. He stressed the evident links

between armed conflicts, climate change and underdevelopment, all of which push people to abandon their home countries to seek better futures. Pope Francis concluded by saying that migration is a fact and therefore needs to be disciplined and sustained. The United Nations pact for secure migration, food security and rural development, required systematic and coordinated intergovernmental action, in agreement with existing international norms.

### **IFAD**

The most recent Executive Board approved five new projects, and the Organization is now busily engaged in discussions for its 11<sup>th</sup> Replenishment. Long gone seem to be the days when the financial certainty of the Fund was under question, although it remains to be seen how the support from the new US Administration will evolve. Anyone who wishes to follow these aspects more closely can go to:

<https://www.ifad.org/who/governance/tags/replenishment/40241915>.

One other very interesting leadership role that IFAD has undertaken is chairing the meetings of the Inter-Agency group reviewing the proposals for procurement of the medical provider (see page 1 for more information).

### **WFP**

The new Executive Director, Mr David Beasley has jumped right into the job, prioritizing visits to the major emergencies where WFP is working, not only to remind the world the scale of need of humanitarian assistance in order to save lives but to highlight the consequences of conflict (10 out of 13 of WFP's largest food insecure crises are driven by conflict), as well as to reinforce the need to invest to support sustainable, resilient environments for communities across the globe, so they can prosper and succeed. And he has done these visits together with heads of several UN agencies (FAO, IFAD, WHO, UNICEF, UNDP) to demonstrate the importance of UN collaboration.

For 2018 WFP is looking for 5 to 7 billion US dollars for operational requirements



estimated at 9 billion US dollars. As the needs increase, the donor base needs to be broadened. The ED will visit monthly the US Government to ensure contributions will not decline, in addition to focusing energy on widening the source of contributions. There will be a zero growth PSA and indirect support recovery rate will decrease from 7 percent, to 6.5 percent, beginning in 2018.

### **WFP Alumni Network Annual General Meeting**

The WFP Alumni Network held its second Annual General Meeting (AGM) at WFP headquarters 19-20 June 2017. The Alumni Network (AN) aims at keeping retired and/or separated staff connected with each other, and with WFP. The idea for the Network came to fruition in February 2013 when former Executive Director Ertharin Cousin announced her resolve to establish an Alumni Network. It has a Steering Committee (SC) and local chapters in the USA, Geneva, Rome, Nepal and China. Registered membership stands now at around 135.

FFOA President, Alan Prien, was invited to give a presentation. He explained some of the critical issues dealt with by the Association, such as the switch from the Van Breda medical plan to Allianz, the latest developments at the UNJSPF, the difference between pensions and emoluments, and developments as to the handling of voluntary disclosures by the Government of Italy. Afterwards, various questions were raised related to new policies of Allianz regarding hospitalization. A suggestion was made to have a fixed dollar rate for membership in USA. Furthermore, one Alumni proposed that the SC consider liaison between the FFOA and the WFP/AN, which is being done.

### **News from the Staff Associations**

(Responsible: Alex Van Arkadie)

FFOA maintains regular contacts with serving staff, and, in particular the Staff Associations

that represent them, namely UGSS (representing GS staff in both FAO and WFP), the Association of Professionals in FAO, the WFP Professional Staff Association, and ECSA (the Association representing all staff in IFAD).

One such meeting was held on 10 November, to discuss particulars regarding joint efforts to revive the JAC/MC (the Joint Advisory Committee on Medical Care), since FAO has refused to hold a meeting of this essential Committee since February 2016, despite repeated requests by staff representatives and, what we understand to be a similar request by senior WFP management, as promised to us at our General Assembly in May, by WFP's Deputy Executive Director.

Furthermore, we discussed particulars of the extension, now in process, of the Allianz contract for the next two years. We shall keep you informed.

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### **News from the FFOA Sub-Committees**

#### **Finance**

(Responsible: G. Monciotti, B. Pisani, G. Pucci, A. Prien, A. Fusco-Femiano, M. De Gaay Fortman, P. Pace)

FFOA has accumulated savings, partly as a result of more members now receiving Newsbriefs and other publications electronically. Given current very low or even negative interest rates, the question is how the net value of these savings can be kept stable, without getting involved in risky investments. This capital is needed as a reserve for "rainy days". We have been discussing how to obtain better returns for these funds. Fixed-term deposits give nominal rates of return, considering that one also has to account for inflation. In one of the meetings, some Committee members proposed to focus on social investments, which of course - as any investment - also carries a risk. However, over the last 40 years and more, this kind of investment has hardly shown fluctuations, also due to the fact that the annual dividend has never been more (or less) than 1.55%.

We found that one destination for the savings could be, for example, Oikocredit ([www.oikocredit.org](http://www.oikocredit.org)), a worldwide cooperative and social investor that promotes sustainable development by providing loans, capital and capacity building support to microfinance institutions, cooperatives and fair-trade organizations, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and renewable energy projects in developing countries.

Prior to further pursuing the possibility, we would like to know from you - our Membership - if you would be in favour of using part of the Association's savings to support this noble objective, while at the same time maintaining the value of the Association's capital. We are looking forward to your reactions, particularly from members who have strong feelings for or against it.

Please send your comments to Marius de Gaay Fortman, [mdegaayfortman@gmail.com](mailto:mdegaayfortman@gmail.com), cc: [ffoa@fao.org](mailto:ffoa@fao.org).

## Membership Matters

(Responsible: M. De Gaay Fortman, M. Breschi, R. Fenix, G. Monciotti, M. Saleheen)

The good news is, that we have a slightly higher number of new members registered than last year on 15 October. We should not yet come to the conclusion, however, that our Association has grown this year. We do not know how many members have passed away nor how many members are in arrears, if they have not paid their dues for two consecutive years and did not react to the Treasurer's warning this summer that they would be suspended if they did not pay immediately.

By all means, it is time to advise your colleagues, who are retiring, to register for FFOA membership. Registration as from this November covers membership fees until 2019. Of course, we would prefer that retirees become life members at a cost of € 375. We have requested the UNJSPF to send a letter, to all pensioners residing in Italy inviting them to join the FFOA. You may be aware that the Pension Fund does not share information on pensioners with

others, such as their addresses. If you are already a member and receive this letter, you could just ignore it. This December, our President will send you a letter, stating what we, as FFOA have achieved this year and encourage you to renew your membership and pay your dues for 2018 if you are not a life member.

## Social Support and Recreational Activities

(Responsible: J. Smidt, G. Monciotti, A. Van Arkadie, A. Fusco-Femiano)

### Previous activities

Since Newsbrief 102 of June 2017, the following activities were enjoyed by some of our Members:

August 2017	“Batò Naples Costa Tour”, lungo la costa partenopea Scurcola Marsicana (Abruzzo) e la casa fortificata dei Templari detta Villa Ponzia, Alba Fucens e Santa Maria in Porclaneta
September 2017	Collepardo e Certosa di Trisulti Giglio e Giannutri Ischia Ponza (2 trips) Ventotene e S. Stefano Penne e la Riserva Naturale del suo lago
October 2017	Reggia di Caserta Pistoia e Firenze Viaggio in Friuli, Scorci nascosti nel Nord-Est Castello di Balthus Narni ed Amelia Parco Naturale del Circeo: le Dune, il Parco ed i Laghi costieri Incontro con l'Autore, Roberta Bruzzone Passeggiando intorno al Pantheon Alla scoperta di Ostia Antica Theater in English “The Importance of Being Earnest” Stretching lessons with Giampiero Bartolucci, at the FAO gym Concert by Enrico Camerini Charity concert sponsored by WFP, on the occasion of WF Day

November

Napoli: Quartiere Sanità e il Culto dei Morti al Cimitero delle Fontanelle  
Ninfa, nella sua veste autunnale, e Sermoneta  
Pompei: Scavi, tante novità e nuove aperture  
Passeggiate Culturali: La villa dei Quintili (Appia Nuova)  
Red Gala for 2,000 schoolchildren of Sri Lanka, sponsored by WFP-Italia and Rotary Rome International  
Concert by Enrico Camerini

### Upcoming activities

December

Stoccolma, Santa Lucia e Atmosfere Natalizie  
Campo di Giove e Roccaraso con la Transiberiana d'Italia ai Mercatini di Natale

### Monthly Coffee Mornings

After the summer break, the monthly Coffee Mornings have recommenced. We were pleased to see 27 members at our September get-together.

### FFOA Emergency Fund

This Fund was reactivated at the end of 2016. Should you need temporary urgent help, please contact the Chairperson of the Fund, Ms Joan Smidt ([joan\\_smidt@libero.it](mailto:joan_smidt@libero.it)).

## Your Good Health

### Good Hobbies to start at 60

As you get older, you might find yourself having more spare time - especially as you come to the end of your working life. One of the biggest challenges you can face as you reach retirement age is finding things to fill your spare time.

There are so many hours in a day, and so many possibilities for things to do, but it may seem at first like there's nothing to do. In reality, there are many hobbies and other activities that will get you out and about and keep you physically, mentally and socially active.

You may be worried that you're "too old" to try something new. Well, it turns out you could be wrong. A survey in the UK has found that the majority of people over 60 years of age

take up a new challenge in their later years. Of those surveyed, 71 percent tried something new - from learning a new language to dancing and outdoor activities such as mountain climbing. The survey also revealed that 38 percent of over-60s described their lifestyle as interesting; 20 percent said it was fun and 24 percent said it was rewarding. Over-60s were also asked what hobbies they would like to undertake and the results make for a good guide if you are not sure what to do yourself. Of respondents, 25 percent wanted to learn a new language, while 22 percent wanted to dance and 21 percent wanted to learn a new skill. Other hobbies and activities mentioned included bike riding (10 percent), fun nights out (11 percent), acting (8 percent), yoga (7 percent) and a new sport (6 percent).

Forget what you know about hobbies for older people. Yes, there are many who still enjoy game of chess or bowling, but nowadays, hobbies cross over many age groups.

### So, what works for you?

Extracted from many at 60 writers and arranged by Sabatino Salvi

## News from the Membership

One of the beauties of working in various parts of the world is getting to know people and the rules of the game. Here is the first of three brief memorable episodes from the working days of our Executive Committee Member, Mr Mohamed Saleheen:

### Gardener turned watchman

After long waiting, I was allocated a very nice ex-colonial bungalow where, surprisingly, I inherited a family of six living in the service quarters. The man, Soa, approached me, informed me in a friendly manner that he was employed as a gardener by the former resident and requested me to keep him on the job. Seeing his four little kids, I let him continue as a gardener as the compound had some large trees and a garden, which needed regular attention. Two months on the job, the gardener was only visible once at the beginning of each month and once mid-way, while heaps of fallen leaves were everywhere. When confronted, Soa replied: "Actually, I am a good night watchman; please

give me that job.” Thinking about his children, I agreed. I got up two nights to check if he was doing his job but only saw his nicely made bed on the landing of the stairs; there was no response to my calls. The next day I told him that he was not doing his job and that I was unable to employ him anymore. He was angry and said: “I don’t want to talk about it, because if I do you will not be able to stay in this house.” Upon my insistence he narrated that when he was fast asleep, someone came and shook him; when he jumped up, there was nobody. I told him that I knew who came to wake him up. He asked “Who”? I replied: “God came and woke you up to do your duty as night watchman, and we cannot see God.” Soa protested saying: “How can I sleep here alone on the landing leaving my wife in the quarters, so I joined her.” He called his wife and they both begged and pleaded to give him a last chance as a day watchman. One day, I returned from the office around 10 in the morning to collect a document. The gate was wide open and six big, muscular men were chopping wood from a huge tree they had felled in my yard. I saw my watchman sitting outside his quarters and looking at the men. I called him to ask what was happening. “Who are these guys?” In a very serious composure, Soa replied: “I am a watchman, I am watching. I am not a catch man.” The rest is history.

### **New Members**

A hearty welcome to our new FFOA Members:

Bazza, Mr Mohamed  
 Bergera, Ms Maria Luisa  
 Bettozzi, Mr Armando  
 Bonije, Mr Antonius  
 Borghesi, Ms Sylviane  
 Cantamessa, Ms Luisella  
 Castri, Mr Fabio  
 Clarke, Mr Lawrence  
 Comiso, Ms Gabriella  
 Da Rin, Ms Michèle  
 Del Castello, Mr Riccardo  
 D’Emilio, Ms Anna Lucia  
 Di Berto, Ms Alessandra  
 Floto, Mr Edgardo  
 Gambino, Ms Regina Angela  
 Giles-Saez, Mr Antonio Hector

Gondowarsito, Ms Maria Cecilia Indrawati  
 Gribaudo, Mr Gianfranco  
 Groppo, Mr Paolo  
 Gualtieri, Ms Elvira  
 Higgs, Ms Jill  
 Iannitti Manabene, Ms Lisanna  
 Kauppinen, Mr Jarmo  
 Kerdi, Mr Mustapha  
 Latham, Mr John  
 Laterza, Ms Nivea  
 Manenti, Mr Ambrogio  
 Muenster, Ms Elisa Carlota  
 O’Keeffe, Ms Rosanna  
 Pain, Ms Elizabeth  
 Pandolfi, Ms Lucia  
 Pileri, Ms Alessandra  
 Piva, Mr Giulio  
 Risso, Ms Anna Maria  
 Rubery, Mr Nicholas  
 Terilli, Ms Giuseppina  
 Thompson, Mr Richard Hugh  
 Urbani, Ms Margherita  
 Young, Ms Heather

All retirees ought to join the Association to support its work representing the pensioners, and for their own interest, and should encourage their ex-colleagues to join!

### **IN MEMORIAM**

Pellegrini, Mr Giuseppe  
 22 January 2015  
 Costil, Ms Jacqueline  
 4 July 2017  
 Nastorg, Mr Jean-Pierre  
 9 July 2017  
 Noyce, Ms Penelope  
 1 August 2017  
 Jasiorowski, Mr Henryk  
 16 August 2017  
 Fernandez-Baca, Mr Saul  
 10 November 2017

**On behalf of all the members of FFOA, we express heartfelt sympathy to the families and friends of the above-mentioned members.**